

COINS

Say 'Goodbye' to this
'good buy'—and fast

By Roger Boye

The first question answered this week typifies queries made by several Tribune readers.

Q—I received two mailings from the National Monetary Center, offering for sale uncirculated silver dollars for \$95 each. The dates are 1880, 1881, and 1882, all "S"-mint. Are they a good buy?—T.Z., Chicago

A—Absolutely not. The prices are about double what most dealers charge for those three coins.

By the way, NMC sent the same material to thousands of other persons in the Chicago area. The brochure is loaded with statements that might make a casual reader think Uncle Sam is selling the coins [words like "public announcement," "special release," and "offered to U.S. citizens only"].

NMC is a private company, not affiliated with the federal government. And despite what the brochure says, the coins are not rare. Those silver pieces are three of the most common Morgan dollars minted between 1878 and 1921.

Q—I'd like to know where I can obtain some foreign coins of various denominations.—L.L., Lake Geneva

A—The easiest way is to visit a few coin shops in your area. Many dealers put small-denomination foreign money in a large box and sell each piece at a nominal charge.

Several countries offer proof sets to collectors, much as the U.S. government does. The ordering information varies; if you have specific countries in mind, let me know and I'll supply the addresses. You might also visit with friends or neighbors who have been overseas.